

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,  
My name is Lori Cebelius. I am a second grade teacher in the town of Rocky Hill. I was a special educator for 22 years, and have been teaching 2<sup>nd</sup> grade for 8 years.

As a seasoned teacher, I have seen many initiatives come and go. Some have been more successful than others. Typically, within the realm of education, new programs are the norm. However, I cannot recall having experienced so much that is new ever coming at us so quickly and all within the same time frame.

I firmly believe that as a state, we want the best and the brightest to join our ranks as educators. I greatly fear that the new Teacher Evaluation program, plus Common Core State Standards, plus the Smarter Balanced Assessment will do precisely the opposite. We will scare new, passionate teachers away from the profession....quickly.

In thinking about our newest teachers, in their first years, they are responsible for completing the TEAM program (which replaced the BEST program). Basically, a new teacher has several modules to progress through as part of their on the job training. These modules include written papers, very much like the ones they completed as part of their student teaching internships and experiences. In addition, they are also required to participate in the new Teacher Evaluation program. This is all in addition to learning all there is to know about the day to day workings of a classroom and everything that entails. These young teachers will burn out quickly with so many requirements placed upon them in addition to instructing the students assigned to their educational care. As a citizen of this state, I would prefer to see our young teachers given the room to learn and grow.

Our seasoned teachers are required to go through the same process as our new and mid-career teachers within the confines of the new

Teacher Evaluation document. Lacking in this document is the respect for the knowledge that a seasoned teacher brings to the field. Also lacking is the flexibility for a mid-career or seasoned teacher to add to their repertoire of skills and expertise, to expand their knowledge, to pursue applicable content, and receive recognition for doing so.

I question the logic behind coupling a teacher's evaluation and career with a test score. The Smarter Balanced test or even the CMT does not portray a child's ability on a day to day basis. It is a snapshot at best. It does not account for the child who deals with unrest at home or the proper nutritional needs for success. A child's nuclear family may not look or work the way it did in the "Leave it to Beaver" days. Our students are put through a battery of tests that go on for up to two weeks. Our high school and college students do not have the same amount of testing days. And yet, a student's progress is tied into these tests and our teachers' evaluations are tied into these tests.

The new evaluation process in itself greatly drains time and energy from teachers and administrators alike. The steps it takes for a teacher to complete the paperwork to submit and the time for the administrator to complete his or her portion of the paperwork is daunting. It is not unusual for the process by either party to take more than 2-3 hours from start to finish for each teacher, for each observation. It should be noted, that completing this paperwork typically occurs outside of the workday. It seems contra-productive to spend time in this manner versus the time that is needed to develop instructional plans aligned with new curriculum standards and strategies to further develop the minds of our students.

While it is true that the Common Core State Standards were adopted by the state of Connecticut in 2010, I believe that the roll out did not occur earlier due to the fact that the CMT was still the assessment required. As a result, training for the Common Core has been minimal.